

REMARKS

The Applicant respectfully requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the arguments set forth fully below. Claims 1-38 were previously pending in this application. Within the Office Action, claims 1-38 have been rejected. Accordingly, claims 1-38 are currently pending in this application.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

Claims 1-3, 6-13, 16-23, 26-33, and 36-38 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,253,188 issued to Witek et al. (hereafter "Witek").

Witek teaches a system and method for providing classified ads over the Internet. Internet users can connect to a Newspaper web server and central Web application server to search for and obtain classified ads. Ad records are stored in ad database servers 20 for providing classified ad records on request to application servers 16. To search the ad records, the search process is divided into two principle parts. The first part includes a system entry and pre-selection sequence, and the second part includes a record selection sequence (Witek, col. 12, lines 10-13). More specifically, in the first part the user enters the system and specifies the category of classified ads to be searched. Thereafter, as the user navigates to the respective selected category, the user further specifies a subcategory for the particular category selected (Witek, col. 12, lines 27-37). The selected category and subcategory pair is identified by a category/subcategory ID 46. The second part of the search process includes entering a formal record selection query containing the specific parameters for the ad records the user wishes to see. The specific parameters are entered as primary selection parameters 60 (also referred to as primary selection parameters 142 in Figure 10) and as secondary selection parameters 62 (also referred to as secondary selection parameters 144 in Figure 10). The user manually inputs values into each desired field of the primary and secondary selection parameters 60 (142) and 62 (144).

Witek teaches that the secondary selection parameters include a plurality of mapped fields 70. The mapped fields 70 are "yes-no" secondary features that provide details concerning the ad record subject matter. In particular, Witek teaches that the yes-no fields 70 provide up to 32 features which the user can simply check off in a selection menu (such as element 146 in Figure 10) to further describe the ad to be viewed. However, this is no different than a parametric search in which the parameters are limited to yes or no. The yes-no fields 70 of Witek are all selected as a single grouping, that is each yes-no field is considered a single parameter within a

parametric search. The user selects all desired yes-no fields 70, and then, within a single search step, a search is performed using all selected yes-no fields 70 plus all other input parameters 68 , 72 (Figure 3 of Witek), and 142, 144 (Figure 10 of Witek).

Witek does not teach accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string. Witek teaches searching a database according to a user query, where the user query comprises a number of documents desired (Witek, field 154 in Figure 10), primary selection parameters 142, and secondary selection parameters 144 that include yes-no parameters 146 and keyword search parameters 148 (Witek, Figure 10). A query is not the same as a query string. As described above, the user query of Witek is nothing more than entering the search parameters used in the second part of the search process. The second part of the search process includes the parametric search and the keyword search using the value input into each field by the user. Data input by the user into designated parameter field boxes (items 142, 146, and 148) is a necessary step to performing a parametric search and/or a keyword search, as is well known in the art.

In contrast, a query string as claimed in the present invention is described as a command string written in a specific query language. The query string designates at least the navigation through the directory tree structure to access a specific node or a discrete data item within the directory (Specification, page 30, lines 26-27). The structure of the query language of the present invention is preferably similar to that of SQL (structured query language), but it is specific to the combined technologies of accessing the directory tree structure and setting parameters for a search (Specification, page 31, lines 6-8). Further, the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 of the present application claim a query string, where the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. Clearly, the query string of the present invention defines the results of a search process, that is the specific node defined by its path through the directory tree structure. The user query of Witek defines search parameters to be used in a subsequent keyword search.

On page 3 of the Office Action, it is stated that Witek teaches “users access the directory by a query” and that this is the same as the claimed limitation “accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string”. As discussed above, a query and a query string are not the same. As such, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query string, as claimed within the present application.

Independent claim 1 is directed to a method of accessing information within an electronic system. The method of claim 1 comprises the steps of formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes

nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 2-3 and 6-10 depend on the independent claim 1. As described above, the independent claim 1 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 2-3 and 6-10 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Independent claim 11 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 11 comprises means for formatting a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and means for accessing a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 12, 13 and 16-20 depend on the independent claim 11. As described above, the independent claim 11 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 12, 13 and 16-20 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Independent claim 21 is directed to a research system for accessing information within an electronic system. The research system of claim 21 comprises a research server configured to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a

corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 21 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 22, 23 and 26-30 depend on the independent claim 21. As described above, the independent claim 21 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 22-23 and 26-30 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Independent claim 31 is directed to a network of devices for accessing information within an electronic system. The network of devices of claim 31 comprises one or more computer systems configured to establish a connection with other systems, and a research server coupled to the one or more computer systems to format a searchable database within the electronic system into a directory tree structure, wherein the directory tree structure includes nodes comprising related data and branches comprising links between the nodes, wherein each related item of data is categorized by a navigation path through the directory tree structure and by one or more parameters, each parameter is set with a corresponding value associated with the data item thereby forming a set parameter, wherein the parameters are specific to the node in which the related data is included, and to access a node within the directory tree structure using a query string, wherein the query string defines a navigation path through the directory tree structure to access a specific node within the directory tree structure. As discussed above, Witek does not teach accessing a node using a query string. For at least these reasons, the independent claim 31 is allowable over the teachings of Witek.

Claims 32, 33 and 36-38 depend on the independent claim 31. As described above, the independent claim 31 is allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 32, 33 and 36-38 are both also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Witek in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,292,796 issued to Drucker et al. (hereafter "Drucker").

Claims 4 and 5 are dependent on the independent claim 1. Claims 14 and 15 are dependent on the independent claim 11. Claims 24 and 25 are dependent on the independent

claim 21. Claims 34 and 35 are dependent on the independent claim 31. As discussed above, the independent claims 1, 11, 21, and 31 are each allowable over the teachings of Witek. Accordingly, claims 4, 5, 14, 15, 24, 25, 34 and 35 are all also allowable as being dependent on an allowable base claim.

For the reasons given above, Applicant respectfully submits that claims 1-38 are now in a condition for allowance, and allowance at an early date would be appreciated. Should the Examiner have any questions or comments, he/she is encouraged to call the undersigned attorney at (408) 530-9700.

Respectfully submitted,
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING (37 CFR § 1.8(a))

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